Explanatory Notes for the 2001 Academic Performance Index Base Report

These *Explanatory Notes* are designed to assist educators and other interested parties in interpreting the *2001 Academic Performance Index (API) Base Report*. The *Explanatory Notes* provide details with respect to Academic Performance Index (API) calculations, growth target calculations, and ranking procedures beyond the explanations and footnotes that appear on the report.

The Public Schools Accountability Act

The API is the centerpiece of the statewide accountability system in California public education. The Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) of 1999 (Chapter 3, Statutes of 1999, as amended by Chapter 695, Statutes of 2000), requires that the California Department of Education (CDE) annually calculate APIs for California public schools, including charter schools, and publish school rankings based on these APIs. The PSAA also requires the establishment of a minimum five-percent annual API growth target for each school as well as an overall statewide API performance target for all schools. A school that meets API growth targets may be eligible for awards under the following programs:

· The Governor's Performance Award Program

· The Certificated Staff Performance Incentive Act (Chapter 52, Statutes of 1999)

On November 9, 1999, the State Board of Education (SBE):

· adopted a 1999 base-year API
· defined the five-percent annual API growth target
· established an interim statewide API performance target

Base and Growth Reports

The SBE's actions cleared the way for the publication of the *1999 API Base Report* in January 2000 and the *1999-2000 API Growth Report* in September 2000. This first cycle of reporting was followed by the *2000 API Base Report* in January 2001 and the *2000-2001 API Growth Report in* October 2001.

Each annual API reporting cycle includes two reports: a base report, which appears after the first of the calendar year, and a growth report, which appears after school starts in the fall. This pair of reports is based on APIs calculated in exactly the same fashion with the same indicators but using test results from two different years.

Changes from the 2000 API (Base)

The 2001 API Base Report reflects the first major change in the components that make up the API. The 2001 Base API includes results not only from the Stanford 9 norm-referenced assessment but also from the California Standards Test in English-Language Arts (CST ELA) of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. The methodology for integrating results from the CST ELA was approved by the SBE in September 2001.

Over the next few years results from other standards tests and the California High School Exit Examination will be incorporated into the API. Other legally-required indicators, such as graduation and attendance rates, will be added as they become available.

Finally, the 2001 Base API marks the first use of the Scale Calibration Factor (SCF). The SCF is a numerical constant that is computed by grade span (2-6, 7-8, and 9-11) and then added to each school's API according to the school's grade span.

The SCF may be a positive or negative number. The purpose of the SCF is to enhance the stability and interpretability of the API by ensuring that the state-wide average API does not fluctuate solely as the result of adding new API components.

Students Included in the API

The term "valid test scores" as it appears in various API reports is synonymous with the number of students with STAR test results contributing to a school's API. In determining which

norm-referenced test results should be included in the API, the CDE employed the same pupil exclusion rules used in calculating school-level STAR results that appear on the Internet at

http://star.cde.ca.gov.

1. A pupil record was excluded if the Stanford 9 test administration accommodation for the pupil was more than one grade out of level (e.g., a sixth grader tested lower than 5th grade or higher than 7th grade).

2. A pupil record was excluded if any of the following seven test administration accommodations were marked "yes" for all Stanford 9 content areas:
   a. Braille
   b. Timing/Scheduling
   c. Presentation
   d. Response
   e. Test read aloud
   f. Directions translated
   g. Bilingual dictionary

3. A particular content area of a record was excluded if the percentile rank for that content area was not between 1 and 99.

4. A particular content area of a pupil record was excluded if the test administration accommodation for that content area was marked "yes" for any of the seven reasons under

#2 above.

These rules apply to Stanford 9 results only. Results from the CST ELA are included in the API regardless of accommodations.

Finally, in order to comply with provisions of the PSAA regarding student mobility, both Stanford 9 and CST ELA results are excluded from the API if the pupil first attended the district in the current year as indicated on the STAR answer document.   An exception is made for a student new to a district who has followed a normal matriculation pattern.

Core Elements of the Report
Certain core elements appear throughout the 2001 API Report. They include:
- STAR 2001 Percent Tested
- 2001 API (Base)
- 2001 Statewide Rank
- 2001 Similar Schools Rank
- 2001-2002 Growth Target
- 2002 API Target

STAR 2001 Percent Tested
This percentage is calculated by dividing the number of students tested by the number of students enrolled on the first day of testing in the grades tested. The total enrollment is adjusted by subtracting the number of students exempted from testing due to Individualized Education Program (IEP) statements and the number of students exempted from testing due to parent/guardian written request. The number is rounded down to the next whole number (e.g., 94.9=94). The number of students tested corresponds to the number of STAR student records. The other elements are derived from the STAR 2001

Apportionment Information Report.

2001 API (Base)
The 2001 API (Base) summarizes a school's performance on the 2001 STAR. It is on a scale of 200 to 1000. It is based on the performance of individual pupils on Stanford 9 (all content areas) as measured through national percentile rankings (NPRs) and on the CST ELA as measured through performance levels. In some instances, APIs are also calculated for student subgroups at a school in order to ascertain whether the school meets the "comparable improvement" criterion (see page 6). For details on the calculation of the 2001 Base API, please consult the following documents:

- *2001 API Base: Integrating the California Standards Test for English Language Arts*
- *Calculating the Academic Performance Index (January 2002)*

Both of these documents are accessible at:

http://www.cde.ca.gov/psaa/api.

For schools with grade configurations that include both grades 6 and 7 or 8 and 9, the API for these schools was the average of the APIs for the grade configuration segments weighted by the number of pupils with valid scores in the segments. For example, for a 7-12 school, the API was the weighted average of the APIs for grades 7-8 and for grades 9-11. This procedure is necessary because the structure of the test varies between grades 7-8 and 9-11.

2001 Statewide Rank
All schools that receive APIs are ranked in deciles by school type based on grade

level of instruction: elementary, middle, and high. A rank of 10 is the highest and 1 is the lowest. Each decile in each school type contains 10% of all schools of that type. Small schools with asterisked APIs are not included in determining the cut points for statewide decile ranks; however, small schools do receive asterisked statewide ranks to indicate the decile ranks into which their APIs would have fallen if they had been included in the ranking system. This is done to establish eligibility for II/USP as well as other API-linked programs.

2001 Similar Schools Rank

All schools that receive non-asterisked APIs are also ranked in deciles by school type when compared to schools with similar characteristics. The PSAA specifies these characteristics to be:

- Pupil mobility
- Pupil ethnicity
- Pupil socioeconomic status
- Percentage of teachers who are fully credentialed
- Percentage of teachers who hold emergency credentials
- Percentage of pupils who are English language learners
- Average class size per grade level
- Whether the schools operate multi-track year-round educational programs

To derive these ranks, the CDE employed standard statistical procedures to generate a School Characteristics Index (SCI). All legally-required characteristics were considered as part of these procedures. The characteristics index was then employed in the following fashion to determine the "similar schools rank" of an individual school:

- A comparison group for an individual school was formed by treating that school's characteristics index as a median and taking the fifty schools immediately above and the fifty immediately below based on the SCI. In the event that the individual school's characteristics index was in the top or the bottom fifty of the statewide distribution, that school's comparison group became either the top 100 schools based on the SCI or bottom 100 as appropriate.
- The 100 schools in the comparison group were separated into deciles according to the value of their 2001 Base APIs.
- The API of the individual school was then compared to the APIs of the schools in its comparison group.
- The individual school was assigned the appropriate decile rank.

2001-2002 Growth Target

A school's growth target is calculated by taking five percent of the distance between a school's 2001 API and the interim statewide performance target of 800. For any school with a 2001 API of 781 to 799, the annual growth target is one point. Any school with an API of 800 or more must maintain an API of at least 800.

2002 API Target

The API target is the sum of the 2001 API and the growth target, except for schools with a 2001 API of 800 or more. Targets for small schools with asterisked APIs are calculated in the same fashion. The 2001 Base API used

to calculate this target includes the appropriate SCF, which will also be applied to the school's 2002 Growth API.

Structure of the Report
The 2001 API Base Report is composed of:

1. *County and District Lists of Schools*
2. *School Report*

List of Schools
This list includes all public schools in a district or county for which the CDE has calculated an API. The schools are listed alphabetically by type (elementary, middle, high, and small). Schools with non-traditional grade configurations, e.g., 7-12, have been placed into the school type according to standard criteria established by the CDE. These criteria are available at:

http://www.cde.ca.gov/psaa/api.
A sizeable number of public schools do not appear on the API list of schools. These include:

- New schools that did not administer the STAR test in 2001
- Alternative schools serving non-traditional student populations
- Very small schools with fewer than 11 valid STAR scores

Alternative and very small schools participate in the Alternative Schools Accountability Model.

Schools on the Lists without APIs
Some schools appear on the list of schools without APIs because they have had their 2001 Base APIs invalidated. Under regulations adopted by the SBE,

this may have occurred for one of several reasons:

- Adult testing irregularities have occurred at the school.
- The API is not representative of the total pupil population at the school.
- The rate of students who have been excused from STAR testing by parent request is equal to or greater than 10 percent (schools with rates between 10 percent and 20 percent have had their APIs reevaluated through standard statistical tests to check the representativeness of the tested population).
- The school failed to test a significant proportion of its students in all content areas.
- The school has unresolved problems with STAR demographic data.

School Report
A *School Report* is generated for each school with API information on the *List of Schools.* In addition to the common core elements, the *School Report* includes:

- data on subgroups
- school demographic characteristics

Subgroups
The PSAA defines a "numerically significant ethnic or socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup" as a subgroup "that constitutes at least 15 percent of a school's total pupil population and consists of at least 30 pupils." Also, under the law, if a subgroup defined by ethnicity or socioeconomic disadvantage constitutes at least 100 pupils, i.e., at least 100 pupils with valid STAR scores, that subgroup is "numerically significant"

and required to demonstrate comparable improvement, even if it does not constitute 15 percent of the school population.

These numerical criteria (15 percent and 30 pupils, or 100 pupils) will be computed on the basis of the number of pupils with valid STAR scores for that subgroup.

The school is responsible for demonstrating comparable improvement only for those subgroups that are numerically significant in both 2001 and 2002.

Ethnic/racial subgroups include:

- · American Indian or Alaska Native
- · Asian/Asian American
- · Black/African American
- · Filipino/Filipino American
- · Hispanic/Latino
- · Pacific Islander
- · White (not of Hispanic origin)

According to the definition adopted by the SBE, the "socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup" consists of pupils who meet either one of two criteria:

1) Neither of the pupil's parents has received a high school diploma

OR

2) The pupil participates in the free or reduced price lunch program.

A pupil who is a member of the socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup is also a member of one of the racial/ethnic subgroups. Therefore, it is possible that the total percentage of students in all numerically significant subgroups at a school may exceed 100.

By regulation, "**comparable improvement**" requires that each numerically significant subgroup must meet or exceed 80 percent of the 2001-2002 schoolwide growth target.

The 2001-2002 subgroup target was calculated by first multiplying the schoolwide target by .8 and then rounding the product to the nearest whole number.

There are four minor exceptions to this rule:

1. For subgroups within schools with schoolwide APIs between 781 and 799, i.e., approaching the statewide interim performance target of 800, the annual growth target was one point.

2. Regardless of the schoolwide API, subgroups already at or above 800 have to continue to meet the statewide interim performance target of 800.

3. In schools with 2001 APIs of 800 or more, subgroups with an API of less than 800 have to make growth of at least one point.

4. In instances where 80 percent of the schoolwide target results in a subgroup target that would exceed the distance from the subgroup API to 800, the subgroup target equals the distance to 800.

School Demographic Characteristics
Along with subgroup data, the *School Report* includes the demographic characteristics on which the school characteristics index for the 2001 API school

rankings are based. The data on which the percentages and rates rest were collected from two sources:

1. October 2000 CBEDS data collection (information on teacher credentials, multi-track year round participation, and class size)
2. 2001 STAR student answer documents (information on ethnic/racial distribution, parental education level, participation in free or reduced price lunch program, school mobility, English language learners)

Regarding information taken from CBEDS:

· It is possible for one teacher to be in both the fully-credentialed and emergency-credential categories; therefore, the total of the percentages for "Fully credentialled teachers" and "Teachers with emergency credentials" may exceed 100.

· Average class sizes were derived from the enrollment data reported on the Professional Assignment Information Form (PAIF).

· "Core academic courses in departmentalized programs" reflects average class size in the following subject areas: English, Foreign Languages, Math, Science, and Social Science.

Regarding background characteristics derived from the STAR student answer document:

· School mobility is the percentage of students who first attended the school in the current year, excluding students enrolled in the lowest grade at a school. It is used as a background characteristic only. The criterion for excluding a score from the API calculation is **district** mobility, i.e., any student who began continuous enrollment in the district during the year tested.

The School Demographic Characteristics that appear on this report are used in the formation of the similar schools comparison groups for the similar schools ranking.

STAR 2001 Participation Information

The *School Report* also includes the data elements on which the STAR 2001 Percent Tested (see page 2) is based. These elements include:

· Enrollment in grades 2-11 on the first day of Testing
· Number of students excused by IEP statement
· Number of students excused by parent written request
· Number of students tested